GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4557
ANSWERED ON:18.12.2002
NEW VACCINES
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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the drug prices are likely to go up after 2005, when WTO agreement on medicine comes into operation;

(b) whether a number of new vaccines for diseases like Malaria, T.B. and Cholera are likely to hit the market next year;

(c) whether Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore is conducting the first phase of clinical trials on these vaccines based on bio-technology, developed by the Indian scientists;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether country has great potential to develop new generation vaccines; and

(f) if so, the concrete plan in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA)

(a) to (f) The patents Act contains a number of safe guards such as compulsory licensing and parallel imports, which can be used in case a situation arises where there is a threat, to public health and to accessibility to drugs at a reasonable cost.

The Dept. of Biotechnology, in the Government of India has implemented a project entitled `National Jai-Vigyan Science and Technology Mission` for the development of new generation vaccines for six diseases, viz., HIV/AIDS, Japanese Encephalitis, Rabies, Cholera, Tuberculosis and Malaria. At present, the vaccines are either undergoing preclinical or phase I/II volunteer trials. The subsequent large-scale Phase-III trials or Cholera vaccine would be undertaken after regulatory clearance.
The Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore has developed a combined Rabies DNA vaccine, which has been proved to be very efficacious in experimental animals. Initially the vaccine will be marked for animal use only. Subsequently, after detailed preclinical and clinical study, the vaccine is intended for human use.
The country has developed the expertise towards the development of new generation vaccines based on recombinant DNA technology, which have been developed over the years through R&D support by the department. Based on the leads obtained, the Dept. of Biotechnology has the following major programmes towards vaccine development, viz., Indo-US Vaccine Action Programme and National Jai-Vigyan Science and Technology Mission Programme on development of new generation vaccines. Under the Indo-US vaccine Action Programme, Rotaviral Diarrhoea vaccine will be under going clinical trials in India. Current thrust is on vaccine development of three major diseases, viz HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.